KAPPA ALPHA THETA *Magazine*

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Balance

BY: ISABELLA MARKOVSKI-DICKEY | ALPHA/DEPAUW

Lately, I've been thinking a lot about balance. I've always had a tough time balancing the ever-shifting existence of juggling work, relationships, responsibilities, and self-care. Some days, I'm trying to give my full attention to everything at once: answering messages while planning dinner, supporting loved ones while trying not to neglect my needs, chasing deadlines while still putting out small fires despite the deadlines... To put it simply, it's a lot!

This Summer 2025 issue is about the beauty and challenge of balance. A lot is going on around here in Thetaland: Read about Theta's impact on Indiana University's historic Little 500 on page 14; learn about our special partnership with Jenna Bush Hager, Alpha Theta/Texas, and Thousand Voices on page 18; take in all the fantastic accomplishments members are achieving and the interesting activities members are doing in some stories starting on page 20 and an extra-large Snapshots on page 28; and much more.

Balance isn't a destination, it's ongoing. It's grace over perfection. And sometimes, it's just getting through the day and starting fresh tomorrow. (Admittedly, more of the "getting through the day" than I'd like!)

I hope this issue shows that, despite some chaos and big tasks that feel foreboding, amazing things can and still will happen around you. Remember to stop for a moment and take it all in.

With you in the balancing act, Bella

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- Because Kappa Alpha Theta is not an officially recognized student organization at Duke, Santa Clara, Georgetown, and Harvard, these schools prohibit using their names in any published reference to our Beta Rho, Eta Lambda, Theta Iota, or Zeta Xi Chapters. We designate those chapters with a tilde (~).
- While some terms used in telling members' stories and personal experiences are not currently in use, they were accurate at the time of these members' college experiences.
- In our Spring 2025 issue, a caption on page 13 read, "Alpha Iota Chapter at the University of Washington-St. Louis." It should have read, "Alpha Iota Chapter at Washington University in St. Louis." We apologize for this error!

NEWS, VIEWS, & STUFF YOU CAN USE

Delta Omega/Texas A&M

Maintaining Connections

Each college chapter (active and inactive) has an alumnae contact officer (ACO). It is this volunteer's responsibility to ensure that all the women from her chapter remain connected to Theta. She does this by finding lost Thetas: women for whom we no longer have a current address.

Technology has made the duties of this volunteer position easy to do from anywhere in the world. In fact, we have ACOs living in El Salvador and Germany! You can also be an ACO for a chapter other than your chapter of initiation. If you think this might be the volunteer role for you, check out the vacancies below and email **volunteerengagement@kappaalphatheta.org**.

- **Gamma/Butler**
- **Lambda/Vermont**
- **Alpha Psi/Lawrence**
- **Beta Iota/Colorado**
- **Gamma Gamma/Rollins**
- **Epsilon Epsilon/Baylor**
- **Epsilon Nu/Virginia Tech**
- **Eta Lambda/~**
- **Eta Mu/Occidental**
- **Eta Tau/Tampa**
- **Theta Iota/~**
- **Theta Lambda/Rochester**
- **Theta Mu/Mines**

National CASA/GAL's Federal Funding Terminated

This update is current as of May 2025.

In April, we were saddened to learn about National CASA/GAL's federal funding termination; however, we continue our unwavering commitment to National CASA/GAL and its critical mission of improving the lives of children in foster care. During the past 35+ years, Thetas generously contributed millions of dollars and countless volunteer hours to this important cause and organization, and we look forward to partnering with CASA/GAL for years to come.

Theta staff have been in regular communication with leadership at National CASA/GAL. National CASA/GAL has appealed to the decision to terminate its funding and is hopeful that funding will be restored. In the meantime, they have assured Theta that National CASA/GAL is not going anywhere and will continue to provide basic services to state and local programs on a modified level.

Now more than ever, National CASA/GAL is grateful for the support Theta members have shown. **National CASA/GAL CEO Tara Perry shared the following**:

"All of us at the National CASA/GAL Association are deeply grateful for the decades-long partnership and strong support that Thetas around the country provide to our mission. We are especially grateful for your steadfast advocacy and support during this challenging time. The strength of your powerful voices and outreach efforts on behalf of the CASA/GAL mission and children served are second to none.

There are really no words adequate to express our deep gratitude. We are greatly inspired by how strongly you take to heart your commitment to CASA/GAL programs across the country. Let's stay the course together and continue to spread the widest influence for good.

We couldn't do what we do without our Thetas!"

The best thing members can do to support National CASA/GAL at this time is to ***stay the course***: continue planning signature fundraising events and philanthropy round (for recruitment, if applicable) for next year, and continue supporting the local CASA programs in their communities and/or National CASA/GAL. Be sure to visit **nationalcasagal.org** for the latest information.

Recruitment, New Members, & the Theta Website

Whether you want to learn more about joining Theta, want to learn more about the Theta experience because you are the parent of a collegian, want to recommend a potential new member, or something else entirely, here are some key web pages to help you find exactly what you need. These highlights are designed to answer your most common questions—what membership looks like, how to get involved, and what to expect.

THETA BLOG

How Alumnae Can Support Recruitment

www.kappaalphatheta.org/blog/fraternity/how-alumnae-can-support-recruitment-this-year

Why Greek Life is Important

www.kappaalphatheta.org/blog/fraternity/go-greek-an-analysis-of-student-success-and-greek-life

Maximize the Experience

www.kappaalphatheta.org/blog/fraternity/three-tips-for-making-the-most-of-your-theta-college-experience

BOOKMARK-WORTHY PAGES

Parents, Families, & Support Systems

www.kappaalphatheta.org/members/parents-families-and-support-systems

Introduce a Potential Member

www.kappaalphatheta.org/members/introduce-introduce-potential-member

Recruitment Information

www.kappaalphatheta.org/join-theta/recruitment-information

BUY MERCHANDISE

Meet the 2025 Founders Memorial Scholarship Recipients!

The Leader

BETTIE LOCKE HAMILTON

Kate Park, EPSILON MU/PRINCETON

Computer Science

Kate grew up in Seoul, South Korea. She came to the United States for middle school, which is when she learned the English language. Kate decided on Princeton University to pursue a particularly difficult engineering major to fuel her intellectual curiosity. She has since expanded her skill set and career prospects by navigating the business realm, landing a competitive internship in consulting last summer. Kate not only excels in unfamiliar environments, but she also wants to find ways to make those spaces more accessible for others. When she overcomes an obstacle, she feels compelled to ease that path for the next generation, especially women and international students. Through her various Theta chapter officer roles and as president of the Korean Students Association at Princeton, she has helped new students adapt, integrate, and thrive, no matter their background.

The Motivator

HANNAH FITCH SHAW

Taylor Webb, EPSILON ETA/CENTRE

Psychology

Taylor was initiated as a member of Kappa Alpha Theta the day before she went home to begin chemotherapy. After winning her fight against cancer, she returned to school and hit the ground running. Motivated by her experience, she dove into the field of psycho-oncology to understand the psychological impacts of cancer. Last summer, she created the Young Adult Cancer Compendium, a resource for newly diagnosed young adults that combines research insights, doctor interviews, and patient input to guide others through their own fights, culminating in a quality-of-life research fellowship at the University of Kentucky. As the current president of her chapter, she keeps officers and members focused on improving relationships and sisterhood in an effort to support each other through life's highs and lows.

The Founders Memorial Scholarships are Theta Foundation's most prestigious awards, valued at $12,000 each. Awarded to the top four junior candidates every year, the recipients are intentionally matched with a specific founder based on their shared accomplishments and characteristics.

The Learner

ALICE ALLEN BRANT

Hadley Beechinor, BETA THETA/IDAHO

Agricultural Economics & Animal Science

Growing up on her family's farm, Hadley developed a passion for agriculture. That passion led her to pursue a career in the agriculture industry, specifically commodity trading and hedging within livestock production. Recently awarded Outstanding Junior of the Year by the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS), it will come as no surprise that she is the director of recruitment for the CALS ambassador team and has been selected not just once, but three times, to represent her classmates at National Agriculture Future of America Leaders' Conference. She is currently an undergraduate research fellow completing her own research funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) analyzing the impact of the avian influenza on egg prices. Hadley has proudly served her chapter as academic development director and vice president finance (VPF), tackling challenges like budget cuts and helping members achieve academic goals. Hadley cites Theta as pushing her to reach her highest potential in everything she does.

The Doer

BETTIE TIPTON LINDSEY

Kaitlyn Halamicek, EPSILON IOTA/WESTMINSTER

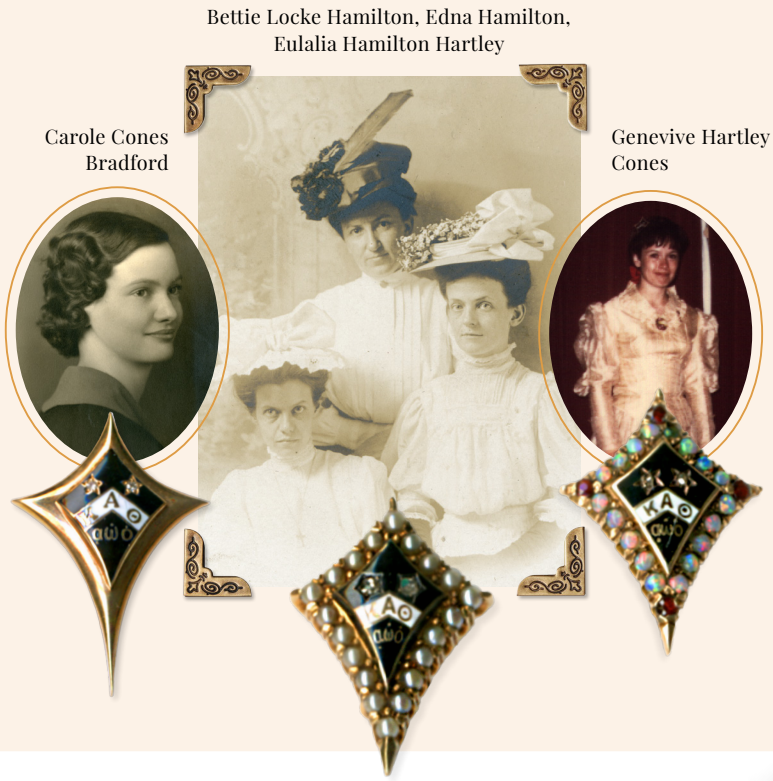
Psychology & Mathematical Data Science

When Kaitlyn joined Kappa Alpha Theta, she was overwhelmed by the support from her sisters to get involved on campus and make the most of her time at college. With their encouragement, she has pushed herself outside of her comfort zone by joining groups like the Blue Blazers Investment Committee and serving on the leadership council as an active player for the Westminster women's soccer team. Her summer internship at Washington University in St. Louis placed her on the front lines of cutting-edge psychological research, which will give her a competitive edge when she applies to graduate school. She has served Epsilon Iota Chapter as both vice president operations (VPO) and vice president diversity, equity, & inclusion (VPDEI), creating new traditions and initiating meaningful dialogue within her chapter. Notably, Kaitlyn was selected as the singular student from her junior class to be part of the historic Skulls of Seven society, the highest honor a Westminster student can receive.

Connections Made *Through* the Badge

From that day on March 14, 1870, when our founders—Bettie Locke, Alice Allen, Bettie Tipton, and Hannah Fitch—first wore their badges to morning chapel at Indiana Asbury, Theta's badge has represented our membership for more than 155 years. Some badges represent even more!

Among the badges in the archives are ones that have been shared through generations of family members or even individual members separated by many years. Also tucked away in the archives are badges that reflect the families with shared Theta memberships.



Bettie Locke Hamilton's Family

There are three badges in the collection that most likely belonged to Bettie's daughters, granddaughter, or great-granddaughter. **Edna Hamilton, Eulalia Hamilton Hartley, Genevieve Hartley Cones,** and **Carole Cones Bradfield** were all members of **Alpha/DePauw.**

Marcia Rigel & Agnes Denike Murray

Marcia Rigel, Delta Mu/Rhode Island, 1965, received her badge as the member of the charter group with the highest scholarship in the first three years of college. Marcia's badge was originally worn by **Agnes Denike Murray, Alpha Zeta/Barnard,** 1909. Marcia maintained correspondence with Agnes' husband over the years. Marcia shared her story and the badge with Theta's archives in 2015.

Marcia Reigel

Joyce Harrison Honeyman (*left*)
Judy Harrison (*right*)

Harrison Sisters

Twin sisters **Joyce Harrison Honeyman** and **Judy Harrison**, both **Beta Zeta/ Oklahoma State,** 1955, shared the Theta experience. Joyce served as a Theta Foundation trustee and National CASA/ GAL liaison. Both badges were donated by Judy Harrison.

Abbie Humphrey North & Martha North Cleavenger

Abbie Humphrey North, Indiana Gamma/Moores Hill, 1873, and her granddaughter, **Martha North Cleavenger, Beta Tau/Denison**, 1941, got to share this badge. It was donated by the Cleavenger family.

Abbie Humphrey North and Grace North

The Wilk Family

Cora Smith Wilk, Alpha/DePauw, 1880; **Edith Wilk Willkie, Beta/Indiana**, 1908; and **Erema Wilk Hamilton, Beta/Indiana**, 1911: Erema was a delegate at Grand Convention 1913 in Minnewaska, NY. Edith also attended that Convention. The diamond badge was presented to Edith at a men's fraternity event at Madison Square Garden in 1940 by the Balfour Company, then the official jeweler for Theta and other fraternities and sororities.

Cora Smith Wilk

Erema Wilk Hamilton

Edith Wilk Willkie

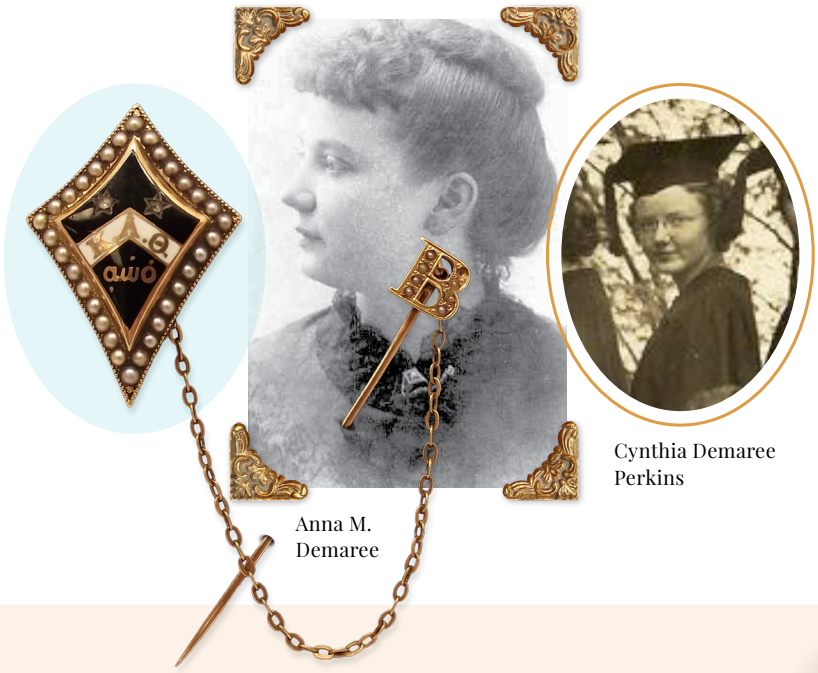
Clelia Dual Mosher

Clelia Duel Mosher & Helen C. Sandford

Clelia Duel Mosher, Psi/Wisconsin, 1891, was a long-time faculty member at Stanford University and is noted for her work in women's health and sexuality. **Helen C. Sandford, Chi/Syracuse**, 1917, received her MBA in 1928 from the University of Michigan and was among some of the earliest women to do so. Helen found Clelia's badge in an antique shop and wore it as her own. She later donated it to the archives.

Demaree Family

Anna M. Demaree, 1888, and her niece, **Cynthia Demaree Perkins, 1936**, both **Beta/Indiana**, shared this badge.



Cynthia Demaree Perkins

Anna M. Demaree

Elizabeth Kennedy Evans

Elizabeth Kennedy Evans & Betsy Evans Ache

Elizabeth Kennedy Evans, Beta Beta/Randolph-Macon Woman's College, 1924, and her daughter, **Betsy Evans Ache, Alpha Omicron/Oklahoma**, 1951, both wore this badge. It was donated by Betsy.

Share Your Badge Story!

Thetas have stories about their badges, whether passed down from family members, within chapters from officer to officer, or a unique connection between generations of members: **We want to hear about those stories!**

Submit a Contact Us form on the Theta website with "Sharing Your Theta Story" selected in the drop-down menu under "Choose a topic."

Source: Benedict Jones, Blueline Media

BREAKING AWAY

The Fight to Ride in IU's Little 500

Each year, the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend is one that is filled with excitement and cheer for Indiana residents and race fans around the world. Since 1911, the Indy 500 has welcomed millions to celebrate the feats of man-made machines, and it continues to be the largest single-day sporting event in the world.

Just over 50 miles from the roaring engines blazing around the Indianapolis Motor Speedway is Indiana University, home to a cycling race known as the Little 500. The Little 500 was created by Howard Samuel "Howdy" Wilcox, which he modeled after the famous Indy 500. Since 1951, the Little 500 has been dubbed the "The World's Greatest College Weekend" and attracts thousands of people each year.

But for the first 37 gatherings, the cyclists racing inside Bill Armstrong Stadium were all men. While women were not explicitly excluded from racing in the Little 500, the only way women could compete was if they qualified against the men on campus. That was the way it had always been until 1987, when four members of Kappa Alpha Theta competed to qualify for the men's race. Despite initially qualifying for the men's race, the Theta team fell one place below the cut to qualify within the top 33 teams. However, their effort didn't go unnoticed and stirred up commotion among racers and race fans; the women deserved their own race.

The following year in 1988, the first women's race was launched on IU's campus. Though Thetas didn't capture the title their first year, their fight to create a space for women has made room for a rich legacy which was highlighted during this year's 37th annual women's Little 500. On April 25 of this year, Beta Chapter again claimed victory, marking not only back-to-back Little 500 wins but also their 10th victory in the event's history.

The first step in becoming a Little 500 rider is rookie week, where most people experience using a single speed and riding across a cinder track for the first time. Rookie week serves as a boot camp for 17 hours across two weeks; IU hosts one in the fall and the spring.

This year's riders—Bailey Cappella, Greta Heyl, Claire Tips, and Greta Weeks—took their victory lap around the track before gathering on the podium to raise their well-deserved trophy. Bailey is a rising senior studying marketing and business analytics and served as the team captain this past year. Though the title of captain comes with immense honor, Bailey stayed nothing but humble about leading the team.

"Leadership can be really lonely and really scary sometimes but they made it all so easy to lead by wanting to show up and be there. They all had their hand in some form of leadership. I just got the title."

Source: Bobby Goddin, The Herald Times

Bailey was the rider who crossed the finish line for Theta last year. In last year's race, the team had a breakaway, and they led for nearly half the race, knowing they had likely secured the win. But this year was different. The 2025 race, for the first time in several years, ended in a sprint, forcing all riders to give everything they had before crossing the finish line.

“Throughout the entire race this year we had ups and downs,” said Claire, a rising senior majoring in news reporting. “We had to serve a penalty, we had to avoid a crash in the first five laps, [and] we had a crash on (lap) 80 that we had to come back from.”

When it came down to the end of the race, Bailey once again mounted her bike for the final laps of the Little 500. Claire was so nervous toward the end that all she could do was sit on the stationary bike in the pit while her other two teammates were up and walking around. Pedaling faster and faster, Bailey got her lead and crossed the finish line with the checkered flag waving above her head.

“She lifted her hands up and I couldn't believe it,” Claire said. “We all just broke down in tears. It was just much more emotional because we had just worked so hard for it and we had to overcome a lot of obstacles this year. We still were able to pull it out in the end. We didn't just prove it to everybody else but we proved to ourselves that we were capable of doing it.”

As the nerves subsided, the cheers from surrounding supporters grew. While Little 500 is regarded as the world’s greatest college weekend, the alumni base help to make the weekend special for all racers, but especially those adorning black and gold. “Fence warmers,” as they’re often called by IU Thetas, are Theta cycling alumnae who come to support the team each year.

They drive and fly from across the country, still supporting the sisterhood and women’s sports years after having left Bloomington. This year, there were about 25 fence warmers present, standing around the fence surrounding the cycling track. Bailey has even had the pleasure of meeting two of the women from the monumental 1987 team: Lee

Source: Jo Fipps, Blueline Media

Source: James Brosher

Source: Grace Urbanski

Ann Guzek Terhune and Martha Hinkamp Gillum.

We've been very fortunate to have such a successful bike team, but we know that none of that would have been possible without the people from '87 and '88 paving the way," Bailey shared. "It wasn't until this year that I really understood what it meant not just to be a Theta rider but to be a female rider and how to carry on that legacy.

Even during the summer months, Theta riders still drive to meet up with one another for bike rides. While their membership in Theta continues to shine brightly, the connection these women have made on the track, especially during early morning practices and rigorous training days, has only strengthened their bond.

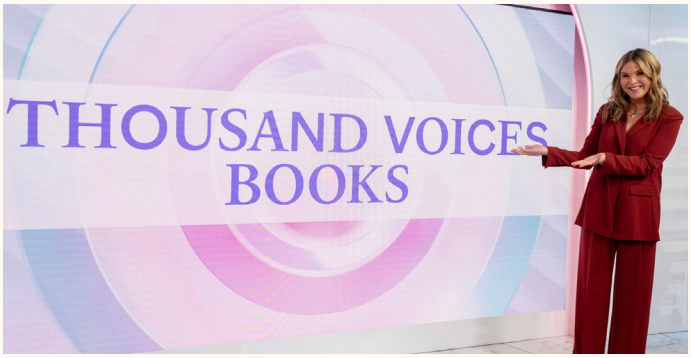
Thousand Voices & Kappa Alpha Theta

For years, Jenna Bush Hager, Alpha Theta/Texas, has graced the television screens of American households. She started as a correspondent for NBC News in 2009 and later moved to join Hoda Kotb as co-host of the fourth hour of *The Today Show* in 2019. Now, she hosts *Jenna & Friends*, where she shares heartwarming stories with a variety of co-hosts like Amy Poehler, Olivia Munn, and Bowen Yang.

When she's not laughing with her co-hosts or reporting stories from across the country, Jenna loves to curl up with a good book. Jenna has always been passionate about reading, evident through the Read with Jenna book club she launched in 2019. Jenna said, "I was always a reader! My mom was a librarian, and I was an English major at the University of Texas. Even in college, it was something that I surrounded myself with when I had time off. It was what I wanted to do; it was what I was obsessed with."

This year, however, Jenna got the exciting opportunity to take her love of reading one step further.

In January, Random House Publishing Group (RHPG) announced a partnership between Jenna Bush Hager and her media company, Thousand Voices, to create a publishing venture called Thousand Voices Books. Thousand Voices and RHPG will help to uplift and share the works of different authors across a wide variety of genres with an emphasis on featuring emerging talent. In this collaboration, Jenna will guide new and emerging authors through each step of the process whether that be editing, cover design, or marketing.



Thousand Voices is set to debut its first novel in October. *Conform* by Ariel Sullivan is a dystopian romance novel in which central character Emeline works to destroy the mysterious and technologically advanced ruling class, the Illum. Readers are guaranteed to lose themselves with each turn of the page.

The world of *Conform* is meant to be shared and enjoyed, which is why Jenna is excited to include a special group of women to help make it happen. Her new publishing venture isn't just meant to uplift new authors like Ariel, but to boost readership among young people. And who better to include than her Theta sisters?

While a student at the University of Texas at Austin, Jenna joined Alpha Theta Chapter, following in her mother, Laura Bush's, Beta Sigma/SMU, footsteps. She recognizes how special it is to share the Theta experience with her mom, sister, and aunt, let alone the impact it had on her during those young, formative years: "When I went to the University of Texas and joined, it was so great … I'm in my mid-forties now and I think back to those days where it made a huge school feel smaller."

Jenna is thrilled to include Kappa Alpha Theta in her newest project by launching a Kappa Alpha Theta x Thousand Voices Book Club. The collaboration between Theta and Thousand Voices aims to activate readership among Theta collegians around the globe, inspire community among sisters through dedicated book club meetings, and encourage friendly competition through social media challenges. "From what I see [in the news, on social media, etc.], people want to read. We want book recommendations. We want to be surrounded with ideas of what's fun to be part of," Jenna said.

To boost *Conform*'s debut, Theta headquarters staff, Jenna, and Jenna's team have carefully selected Theta chapters who will help to show the power of sisterhood and what it can accomplish. Currently, the following select chapters have been chosen to take part in launching *Conform:* Alpha/DePauw, Alpha Theta/Texas, Beta Upsilon/British Columbia, Delta Omicron/Alabama, Eta Lambda/~, Gamma deuteron/Ohio Wesleyan, Gamma Zeta/Connecticut, and Theta Nu/Georgia Tech. These chapters will be instrumental in this process through book club meetings and social media content. Of course, any Theta college or alumnae chapter can get involved by creating their own book clubs and sharing their accomplishments and photos with Theta headquarters staff via social media or by emailing **marketing@kappaalphatheta.org**. The hope is that these book clubs will become a permanent fixture in all Theta chapters!

Book clubs and Theta have an important aspect in common: community. Jenna said, "One of the reasons I'm so excited to partner with [Kappa Alpha Theta] around Thousand Voices [is to] form community around books. I think that's what I've learned inadvertently through Theta is that community is so important. People need community now more than ever. We're really isolated via social media and … what we found is that being part of a group is so helpful for combating loneliness, for feeling joy, and one of the ways people can do that is through book clubs."

> [Conversations around books] tend to be powerful because you're actually talking about humanity, life, what it means to be a woman, and all the other things ***that really matter.***"

From President to Resident to Mayor:

A Sit Down with Liz Weddell Gibbons

Just 13 miles outside St. Louis, Mo., lies a charming, close-knit community called Kirkwood. With historic ornate architecture, Amtrak rolling right through town, and world-class museums, it's no wonder why multiple generations of people have stuck around this Midwest gem. Of them is Liz Weddell Gibbons, who first moved to Kirkwood when she was 10 years old. Recently, however, she traded in her title as a resident last April when she was elected as the mayor of Kirkwood.

However, Liz's leadership experience began well before starting her term in public office; it started when she served as president of Gamma Tau Chapter at the University of Tulsa. Though her member class was much smaller than the population she currently oversees, Liz credits much of her success to the skills she gained as chapter president.

During her time at UTulsa, Liz was a "pom pom" girl, which she clarifies was an entirely separate entity from the cheerleading squad. Within Theta, she and her sisters even used to create and perform skits for the chapter.

"We had so much fun with it," Liz laughed. "I took a major role in one of the skits one time. That was fun, [but] I think it's all much more serious now."

Liz explained that one of the many things Theta taught her was how to engage new members into the "life of the sorority" and at UTulsa. Entering college as a first-year student can be scary enough. However, a sisterhood like Theta's

offers the opportunity to grow authentically with a system of unconditional support.

> **"[I wanted to] make them feel comfortable and help them learn all about the sorority," Liz elaborated. "That's what I do now. I want citizens engaged."**

Today, Liz lives just three blocks from one of her Gamma Tau sisters and regularly hosts office hours. Her "coffee with the mayor" office hours have helped bridge the gap between residents and the Kirkwood public office.

"I want to be available; I want to be transparent; I want to be here for all citizens," Liz said. "That's something I learned as president of the Theta house at the University. I hear from [residents] on a regular basis that they see me out there and available to them, and it makes them happy."

This year has been instrumental for women of all ages serving in leadership roles and in the public eye, whether that be in politics, sports, or on the silver screen. Liz herself is only the second woman ever to serve as mayor of Kirkwood.

As a longtime resident of Kirkwood, Liz noticed the changes in the city and felt the need to step up. Many small homes were torn down, and multi-million-dollar homes were built in their places. Liz has lived in Kirkwood for almost all her life. These changes, which would have created a lack of low-income housing, would have prohibited the multi-generations of people—whom Liz grew up with—from continuing to thrive.

Liz laughed when asked if she had ever pictured herself running for public office: "To tell you the truth, no."

"I retired, and I started watching what was going on in Kirkwood," Liz explained. "I was getting concerned, and I made the decision that since I couldn't find someone else to run, I should step up and do it. So, I did. That's how I am where I am today."

> **"You learn to be a leader from putting yourself out there," Liz encouraged. "Get involved in the communities [you] live in. There are boards, commissions, and committees, and communities need the citizens to be involved. They need people of all ages."**

Previously, Liz worked as executive director with the St. Louis-based nonprofit organization Character Plus. Character Plus works with schools, school administrators, and teachers to incorporate character education. Its goal is to create an environment where everyone has a sense of belonging and strong personal relationships and prioritizes a focus on core ethical values.

Liz recommends that Thetas who want to make a difference, whether on a local or national level, take leadership positions.

Though running for mayor may be off the beaten path for most, initiating change comes in all shapes and sizes. Leadership potential, as one of the four points of the kite, does not have a singular definition. Liz recently ran into an old friend of hers from high school. When his children found out their father knew the mayor of Kirkwood, they were enamored.

"His daughter said, 'You must be so smart,' and honestly, I don't know about that," Liz said. "I just connect with people. That's one of the things that I think Theta helped me with was just learning how to get along with people."

This year, Theta will once more welcome new members across the United States and Canada and continue to grow this amazing alumnae network.

Leadership potential and fostering connections are possible anywhere, so jump in, try something new, and get started!

CASA/GAL VOLUNTEERS

Past & Present

Since the National CASA/GAL Association for Children's inception in 1977, it has ensured that children across the country have the support and guidance they need to find a safe and loving home. But just as much as National CASA/GAL helps children find their forever homes, it's also home for the millions of volunteers who have walked through local, state, and national program office doors.

Volunteer advocates, past and present, help make the organization what it is, and Theta is proud that many of the volunteers have come from inside this sisterhood.

Victoria Benge, **Delta Upsilon/Eastern Kentucky**, serves as executive director for CASA of the Wilderness Trail and is one of the countless of Thetas across the country who have taken their dedication to National CASA/GAL's mission beyond their undergraduate years. Victoria grew up in a small town in Colorado and is the daughter of an American mother and English father, providing her with dual citizenship.

Victoria had an unconventional upbringing. When she was just 16 years old, she asked her parents if she could spend a year in England with her aunt and uncle. Little did she know that just one year would turn into eight. After finishing high school, Victoria spent her undergraduate years at the University of Essex, graduating with a bachelor's degree in history and later obtaining a master's degree from The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) in gender studies. After her years spent abroad, she settled down in eastern Kentucky where she lives today.

Victoria's master's degree focuses on how to uplift marginalized voices and how to work to make the world a better place. But even before graduating, Victoria planned on going into nonprofit work, something for which she has always had a passion. After moving to Kentucky, Victoria worked from home, which is when her mother, a lifelong social worker, encouraged her to become a CASA/GAL volunteer.

Victoria served as a CASA/GAL volunteer for one year, a volunteer coordinator for one year, and in January of 2018, became executive director for CASA of the Wilderness Trail.

"I wanted to give back and make the world a better place," Victoria said. "The thing I love most about my job is you never know what each day is going to bring. [My duties] can range from planning and fundraising events to handling volunteers to meeting with donors. It's a wide array of things and I love being able to do all of it."

Victoria was only 25 when she was named executive director, making her the youngest of all CASA/GAL program directors in the state of Kentucky. But her achievements don't stop there: In 2022, she won the National CASA/GAL Association Kappa Alpha Theta Program Director of the Year award. Victoria was nominated by fellow staff members and had no idea she was even in contention for the award. Victoria explained that the challenges of the role and being the youngest among her directorial peers taught her to believe in herself and her abilities.

"The award is a dedication to our staff and program and shows just how far we have come and the quality of advocacy that we provide," said Victoria. "When I took over, there was a lot of rebuilding and making people have confidence in the program again. To receive that award from National CASA/GAL was just huge and showed how far we had come."

Through her time as executive director, Victoria has spent a lot of time with Delta Upsilon Chapter at Eastern Kentucky University. Wanting to get more involved and understand the organization, she contacted a recent EKU graduate who chatted with her about Theta and assured her that she could still become a member as a post-undergraduate. In 2023, Victoria became an alumna initiate of Delta Upsilon Chapter. Victoria has served as an advisor for Delta Upsilon Chapter for the past two years and has loved every minute of it.

"I just love it," Benge said. "The girls … I get to work with are just phenomenal women. Being able to pour into them and help them grow into amazing women is the most beneficial thing for me."

The volunteer experience for National CASA/GAL transcends time and generations.

Laurie Griffith Buczek, **Alpha Gamma/Ohio State**, is a former CASA/GAL volunteer (for a total of 16 years) and resides in Arizona with her family.

Laurie served as philanthropy director during her time as a Theta collegian, which coincidentally, was the same year that Theta announced National CASA/GAL as its national philanthropy. In this role, she was tasked with working with the newly established Franklin County CASA Organization, coordinating events and elevating its mission.

Laurie became extremely passionate about the cause. After months of working with the local CASA/GAL program, Laurie decided to join its mission and became part of the first class of Franklin County CASA's volunteers.

"These kids who don't have a voice need a voice," Buczek explained. "How important is that, for someone to just come in and purely look and say what is in the best interest of the children? I felt a connection to these kids."

While most CASA/GAL volunteers are retirees, Laurie took on her first case the summer after she graduated from Ohio State. As she recalled, she was very "idealistic" and "bright eyed and bushy tailed," just eager to get started.

Today, Laurie serves as group vice president of International Data Corporation (IDC) and is a mother of two children, a college junior and a college freshman.

Throughout her 16 years volunteering, Laurie has served communities all over the country, from Arizona to Massachusetts and even Iowa.

"The level of resiliency of these little kids is awe inspiring," Laurie said. ***"It gives perspective when you're facing something. These children can still have hope and resilience after everything they've gone through. That has really carried me through my life."***

Her mission as a CASA/GAL volunteer has always been to provide the children she serves with one stable figure in their lives. Everything in these children's lives changes around them. CASA/GAL volunteers may be the consistent figure who knows their favorite color, their favorite food, or even the color of their eyes.

While Laurie's days as a CASA/GAL volunteer are in the past, she continues contributing to the National CASA/GAL organization and is still incredibly passionate about the mission today.

National CASA/GAL and its volunteers make a real difference—maybe even the difference—in children's lives. Volunteers then and now are vital, and Thetas just like Victoria and Laurie continue to be the ones to answer the call.

The FHC Prepares for the Fall

When the school year ends and chapter houses grow quiet, it might seem like everything hits pause. But for the Fraternity Housing Corporation (FHC), summer is anything but slow. In fact, it's one of the busiest and most vital times of the year.

While members are away, FHC staff is hard at work behind the scenes, transforming each house into a refreshed, safe, and welcoming space for the fall semester. From deep cleaning and maintenance to design upgrades and staff training, here's a look at what really goes on during those summer months.

SUMMER RESET

The moment the doors close for summer, the work begins. FHC property managers coordinate with facility directors, contractors, and vendors to tackle a long list of essential tasks. **Here's a glimpse at our summer checklist:**

- **Inspections:** Elevators, backflow systems, and health and safety checks are all reviewed and updated.
- **Preventive maintenance:** HVAC systems are serviced, refrigeration units are checked, and grease traps are cleaned to prevent future issues.
- **Deep cleaning:** From carpets and upholstery to windows and kitchens, every corner gets a thorough cleaning.
- **Landscaping:** Irrigation systems are repaired, flower beds are replanted, and fresh mulch is laid.

These tasks are critical to maintaining the quality and safety of each home. It also helps maintain the integrity of equipment, appliances, and furniture. While most of this maintenance is performed in the summer, some of this maintenance may be required 2-3 times per year.

UPDATING EQUIPMENT AND DESIGN

Summer is the perfect time for design and equipment updates. Depending on what has been approved via the chapter's wish list, the house could get a design update, new equipment, and/or new roofs, boilers, and/or HVAC systems. While the design work has the most visual impact, replacing essential systems takes a significant investment and is necessary to ensure the house is safe and comfortable.

DESIGN

When it comes to design, the FHC interior designer works closely with the property managers and chapter leadership to bring these visions to life.
That could mean any of the following:

- Selecting new flooring,
- Ordering updated living room furniture, and/or
- Choosing fresh paint colors for chapter rooms or even the exterior.

Design boards are shared, feedback is gathered, and orders are placed, all with the goal of creating a space that reflects Theta's values and each chapter's unique personality.

EQUIPMENT

FHC property managers may upgrade equipment within a facility over the summer. This could include access systems, new kitchen equipment, HVAC equipment, washers and dryers, and more. Property managers work with several vendors and the project manager to ensure that the correct equipment has been selected.

NEW STAFF TRAINING

Sometimes, summer brings with it new faces! Some houses are welcoming a new facility director during this time, and the FHC property manager works to ensure that the new facility director is set up to succeed.

Property managers will often spend 3-4 days onsite, providing hands on training that covers the following:

- FHC policies and procedures,
- How to collaborate effectively with chapter members, and
- The ins and outs of managing the specific facility.

This training ensures that the new facility director is confident, capable, and ready to support the chapter from day one.

Even though the house may seem quiet, there's a lot happening behind the scenes. FHC staff is committed to making sure everything is in top shape so members can return to a beautiful, functional, and welcoming space in the fall.

KAΘ Cares

DAY OF SERVICE

Theta's Day of Service, recognized each year on Bettie Locke Hamilton's birthday, brings collegians and alumnae together all over the world for the common goal of spreading the widest influence for good.

Every Oct. 19, Thetas commit to do something meaningful and impactful in their respective communities.

Service is the act of volunteering to benefit a community with the knowledge that one will not receive payment. Service, also known as volunteerism, focuses on time given and is a hands-on activity during which a member interacts with an organization, agency, or community being served. Theta's definition of service focuses on donating time and talent to create positive change in the community. This can also be tied to service learning, in which both the server and the served learn from their interaction. This allows Thetas to make connections between themselves, the skills they offer, and the needs of the community in which they are working.

Put simply, ***Kappa Alpha Theta cares.*** Theta cares about its members, members' and chapters' communities, and the sisterhood and friendship fostered within this organization.

Need ideas on how to spend your Day of Service this year?
Use the chart below to brainstorm ways you can help in your community!
For more ideas, visit ***www.kappaalphatheta.org/events/day-of-service!***

Bettie Locke – The Leader

- ◊ Host a clothing swap for everyone on your college campus
- ◊ Volunteer at a women's shelter
- ◊ Attend (or even host!) a run/walk event for an important cause
- ◊ Work with a therapy dog/animal organization to make visits in your local area

Hannah Fitch – The Motivator

- ◊ Volunteer for a local organization to help people register to vote
- ◊ Take a group to a food pantry to volunteer together
- ◊ Lead activities at a care facility for seniors
- ◊ Drive seniors around your community (this can be through an organization or people you know!)

Alice Allen – The Learner

- ◊ Tutor students after school
- ◊ Help children learn to read by volunteering for a local library or literacy program
- ◊ Volunteer at a local hospital
- ◊ Help at a community garden

Bettie Tipton – The Doer

- ◊ Cook a meal at a local shelter or at an organization that serves people with food insecurity
- ◊ Rake leaves for an elderly neighbor
- ◊ Volunteer at an animal shelter
- ◊ Help a local non-profit with administrative tasks

If every single Theta completed some act of service, no matter how big or small, the world would be a kinder, happier, and more loving place.

Snapshots

INDIVIDUAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A Leadership potential is a characteristic that all Thetas aim to achieve. **Robin Wenneker, Alpha Mu/Missouri**, has gone above and beyond to meet this point. Robin served as chair of the Board of Curators for the University of Missouri System. Before stepping into this role, Robin served as the president of the Mizzou Alumni Association, was awarded Outstanding Graduate of the last decade in 2001, was selected as a member of the Missouri 100, and was honored with the Mumford Distinguished Service Award.

B **Dr. Tracy Stevens, Alpha Mu/Missouri**, is a cardiologist who has dedicated her life to researching women's heart health and cardiology problems. She is a co-founder of the Muriel I. Kauffman Women's Heart Center at Saint Luke's in Kansas City, Mo. The center celebrated its 30th year in 2024 and hosted an exciting gala that raised more than $1.7 million for further research.

C After serving in the Delaware State Senate for four years, representing the 5th district, **Kyle Evans Gay, Alpha Epsilon/Brown**, was chosen to serve as Delaware's 27th Lieutenant Governor. When she assumed office in January, she became the third woman to serve in this role in Delaware state history.

D **Donna Fagundes, Gamma Chi/Fresno State**, was named Fresno Chamber of Commerce Ambassador of the Year 2024 as a representative of Valley Wide Ag Insurance Services, Inc. Congratulations, Donna!

E This year, the Fraternity Executives Association (FEA) recognized and awarded **Mandy Womack, Gamma Sigma/San Diego State**, with the 2025 Order of Fraternal Excellence Award at the FEA Annual Meeting in Denver, Colo. Mandy has worked at the University of San Diego for 30 years and currently serves as assistant dean of students. She is part of the Association for Student Conduct Administration (ASCA), the Association of Fraternity and Sorority Advisors (AFA), the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), and the American College Personnel Association (ACPA). FEA's honor is not one that is awarded annually, but instead is awarded to an individual who has obtained professional excellence related to a fraternity and sorority.

ALUMNAE, REUNIONS, + EVENTS

F **Nu Chapter at Hanover College** welcomed 73 Thetas to celebrate Founders Day 2025! They hosted a variety of Thetas from 50-year members to new members across eight chapters: **Nu/Hanover, Alpha Tau/Cincinnati, Beta Omicron/Iowa, Gamma Iota/Kentucky, Gamma Upsilon/Miami, Delta Upsilon/Eastern Kentucky, Epsilon Eta/Centre, and Theta Kappa/Louisville**.

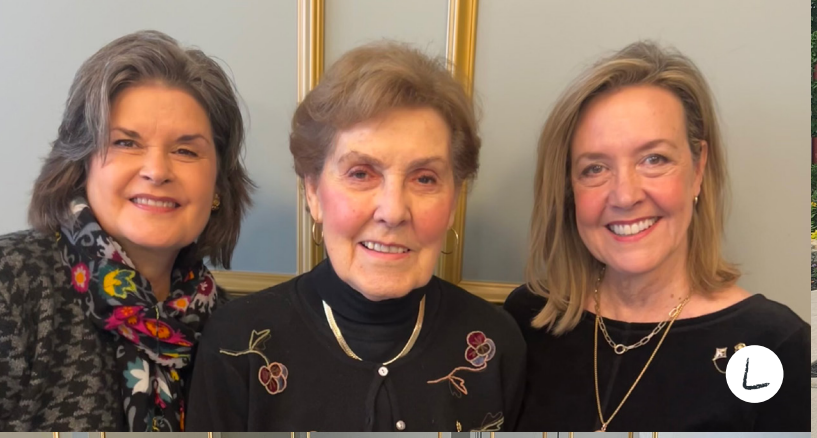
G **The Naples-Marco Island-Bonita Springs Alumnae Chapter** had a great time together for a good cause during last year's Day of Service.

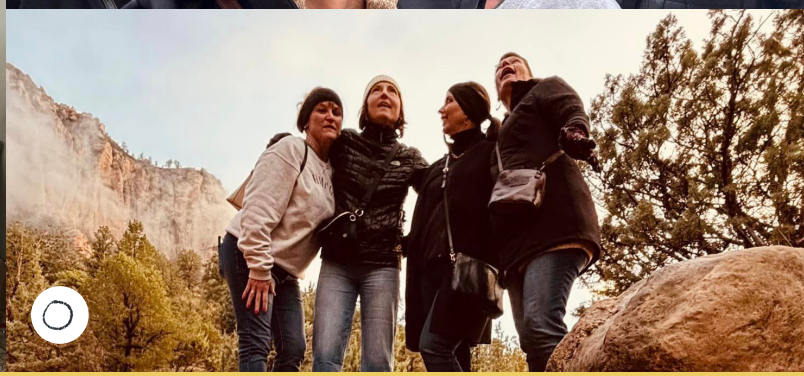
H Over the winter, 12 sisters from **Alpha Chi Chapter**'s class of 1977 traveled from 10 different states to meet and spend a relaxing cruise vacation together. Pictured are **Cynthia Shambaugh Armbruster, Suzy Smith Primavera, Carla Crofoot Koller, Susan Jellison Hall, Molly Nielsen Lucien, Judith Vanderwielen Johnson, Kathy Reed Martindill, Tami Rodriguez Banter, Carol Saunders, Jennifer Flannery Keleher, Marcia McLean,** and **Tina Corsaro Sullivan,** all **Alpha Chi/Purdue**.

I Back in November, sisters from **Beta Delta Chapter**'s class of 1987 celebrated an early reunion weekend in Austin, Tex.

J This fall, members from **Gamma Tau Chapter**'s class of 1982 enjoyed a reunion trip in Park City, Utah. Pictured are **Denise Raiche Wulff, Lisa Wilson, Robyn Cowley, Maureen Healy Pranske, Cathy Colwell Ruprecht, Jill Sisler Cleverdon, Kathleen Jasper Cameron**, and **Kelly Lane Gates,** all **Gamma Tau/Tulsa**.

K The **Palos Verdes Peninsula Alumnae Chapter** had a great Founders Day celebration. In addition to the festivities, two 50-year Thetas were honored: **Susanne Ganz Condon, Gamma Sigma/San Diego State,** and **Marnie Hartley Gruen, Delta Iota/Puget Sound**.





L The **Omaha Alumnae Chapter**'s Founders Day celebration brought together Thetas from many generations, including this mother-daughter trio. Pictured above are **Jennifer Worrall Hibben, Joan Alexander Worrall,** and **Lisa Worrall,** all **Rho/Nebraska.** Not pictured are the other Thetas in their family. Joan's late mother **Miriam Willits Alexander, Alpha Mu/Missouri**, and **Allie Worrall, Rho/Nebraska**, respective daughter, granddaughter, and niece.

M The **Grand Rapids Alumnae Chapter** celebrated Founders Day earlier this year!

N **Alpha Mu Chapter**'s class of 1974 recently celebrated their 50th anniversary with a reunion weekend trip to Booneville Missouri hosted by **Lisa Sombart Street, Alpha Mu/Missouri**. They visited the Warm Spring Ranch, home to the Anheuser Busch Clydesdales.

O For their annual trip, four sisters from **Epsilon Iota Chapter** traveled to Sedona, Ariz. Pictured are **Wendy Humphrey, Sue Dunafon Haugen, Jennifer Watkins Cranford,** and **Lana Cross Zerrer,** all **Epsilon Iota/Westminster.**

P Members from **Gamma deuteron/Ohio Wesleyan** enjoyed an alumni weekend celebrating 50 years of membership and sisterhood. Pictured are **Diane Stedman Rees, Mary Snoke Dunham, Lorraine Farquhar, Penny Lee Speidel, Rose Coleman Kolar, Marie Eslinger Horowitz,** and **Jan Kennedy Lail,** all **Gamma deuteron/Ohio Wesleyan.**

Q **Dallas Alumnae Chapter** members had a great time serving their community and enjoying the outdoors during Day of Service last year.

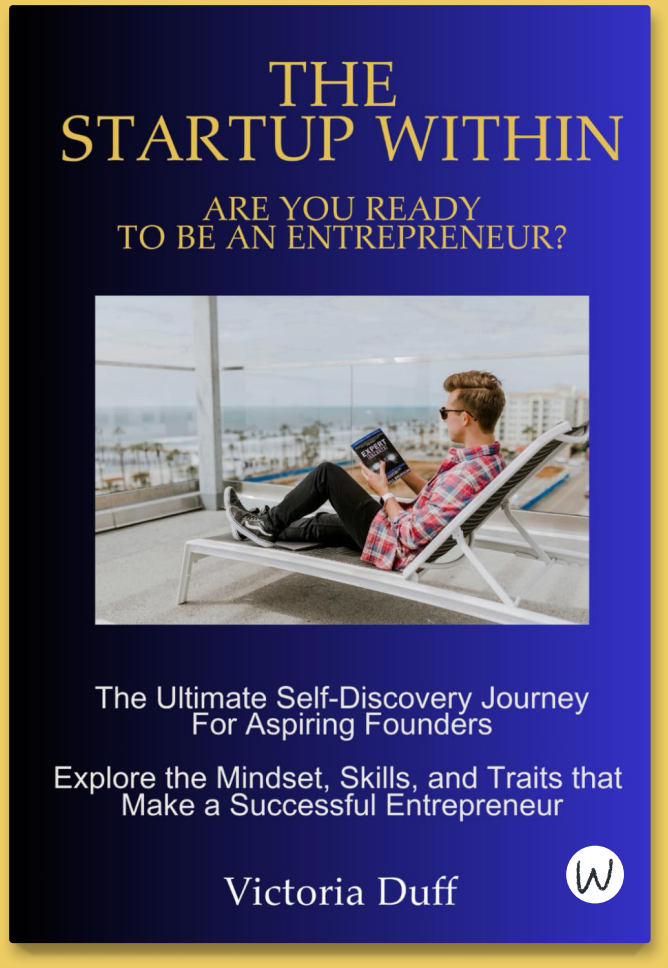
R **Kate Rogers** is a fourth-generation Theta who was initiated into **Beta Iota Chapter** back in October. Her grandmother, **Pam Quilici, Beta Mu/Nevada;** mother, **Tracie Matorian Rogers, Beta Delta/Arizona;** and aunt, **Jamie Matorian Newmarker, Beta Delta/Arizona,** were all in attendance at her initiation. Maybe even more special, Katie's great-great-great-aunt, **Alva Quilici Durhan,** was a founding member of **Beta Mu Chapter at the University of Nevada-Reno** in 1922.

S This past fall, nine sisters from **Alpha Sigma Chapter**'s class of 1966 spent two nights in Cle Elem, Wash. Fifty-nine years since joining Kappa Alpha Theta, they still reconnected with the same laughter and love they shared before.

T The **Coachella Valley Alumnae Circle** is one of Theta's newest alumnae groups! Earlier this year, the circle gathered 24 sisters to celebrate Founders Day in Quinta, Calif.

U When the **New Orleans Alumnae Chapter** gathered to celebrate Founders Day, they also celebrated a very special member, **Jane Leach King, Alpha Phi/Tulane**, for reaching 75 years of Theta membership. Jane was named their Theta of the Year. Congratulations, Jane!

V Thetas' commitment to service is as strong as ever! The **Fresno Alumnae Chapter** hosted its second annual book drive where they accepted gently used and new books for CASA of Fresno and Madera Counties.



"Karna Small Bodman is in the top echelon, male or female, of modern spy writers. She's been there and done that and gets it all right."
—JOHN LESCROART, New York Times bestselling author of The Missing Piece and The Rule of Law
PROTECTING
JESS
KARNA SMALL
BODMAN

AUTHORS

With 20 years of experience on Wall Street and 30 years of experience through her own startup consultancy, **Victoria Duff, Omega/UC Berkeley**, wanted to share her experience with others. Her newest book, *The Startup Within - Are You Ready to be an Entrepreneur?* provides an insight into the startup journey and covers networking, accounting, compliance, and more.

Protecting Jess is the newest thriller released by author **Karna Frisby Bodman, Eta/Michigan**. This story, released back in March, contains political intrigue and undercover agents with a romantic twist.

JUST TAKE A Moment

We'd love to hear from you, and we'd love to share what fun you're up to with your Theta sisters. We invite you to just take a moment to submit a "Snapshot" for an upcoming issue of the *Theta Magazine*. Send us a photo with personal or professional news, of past travels, virtual or in-person reunions, or a photo depicting a cherished Theta experience or memory. There's no news too small, and we think everything Thetas do is newsworthy!

WANT TO GO A STEP FURTHER?

Help us visually portray Theta authentically and inclusively. Representation matters, and it is important to us that Theta's materials reflect the diverse identities of our members. The activities below are just some that we'd love to receive more photos of:

- Events including reunions, group events, and get-togethers;
- National CASA/GAL, philanthropy, and service involvement; and
- Candid (unposed!) sisterhood photos.

HOW TO SUBMIT:

- Online via the Theta website: **www.kappaalphatheta.org/contact**
- Email **marketing@kappaalphatheta.org**

NOTE:

Digital photos must be shot at the highest quality possible and submitted at the largest size possible. Please don't crop, retouch, filter, or edit in any way.

BECOME *a* *Life Loyal* THETA!

When you become a Life Loyal member, you help fund educational, communications, and personal development programs for all Thetas. By becoming Life Loyal, you receive every printed issue of the *Theta Magazine*, Fraternity dues payments for life*, a handcrafted lapel pin, a personalized wallet card, and more.

**Not including alumnae chapter dues.*

You can join and **pay online** by visiting **www.kappaalphatheta.org/members/life-loyal/join-life-loyal.**

To join and **pay by mail**, **print the enrollment form** available at **thetalifeloyal.com** and mail the completed form with your check or credit card info to **Kappa Alpha Theta, attn: Angela Merk, 8740 Founders Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268**.

To join and **pay by phone**, call Theta headquarters, **800-526-1870 ext. 140**, and provide your contact and payment information.

THESE WOMEN ENROLLED BETWEEN FEBRUARY 1 AND APRIL 30, 2025.

Rho/Nebraska | Jamy Stallings Sullivan
Phi/Pacific | Rebecca Doerr Karraker
Psi/Wisconsin | Sarah Moran Krans
Omega/UC Berkeley | Catherine Buerchner Woelkers
Alpha Eta/Vanderbilt | Lauren Toledo Vaughn
Alpha Iota/Washington University-St. Louis | Jennifer Mackie McGowen
Alpha Xi/Oregon | Chace Franche Wolff
Beta Zeta/Oklahoma State | Donna Smith Hampton
Beta Xi/UCLA | Mindy Fenton Henderson
Beta Rho/~ | Betty Becker Taylor
Gamma Iota/Kentucky | Mary-Charles Wombles Davis
Gamma Upsilon/Miami | Liz Pogue Marshall
Gamma Phi/Texas Tech | Ashley Taylor Madison
Delta Epsilon/Arizona State | Christina Mohr
Delta Kappa/LSU | Rubye Noble Evans
Delta Omicron/Alabama | Christy Speas Shivers
Epsilon Pi/Bucknell | Tricia Bosnic Seal
Epsilon Sigma/UC Irvine | Kelly Welch
Epsilon Phi/Chicago | Mary Knecht Shepard
Zeta Mu/MIT | Kate Downes
Eta Lambda/~ | Marie Adams
Eta Tau/Tampa | Riley Edwards

Unsure about joining Life Loyal but want to support the next generation of Thetas? Pay your annual alumnae dues! Learn more at ***thetaforalifetime.org.***

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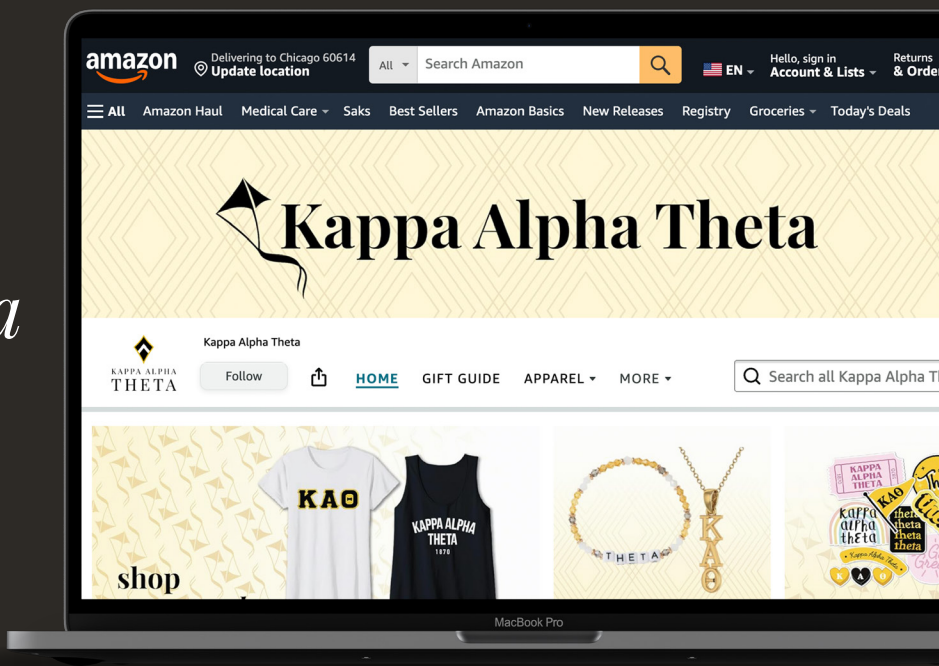

Visit our new Amazon Storefront to shop for officially licensed merchandise from a variety of vendors in one place. Plus, shop for Amazon-exclusive gear for alumnae, parents, and more.

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SAVE THE DATE

GIVINGTUESDAY 2025

Each year, GivingTuesday provides the opportunity for Thetas to unite in support of a cause about which we are all passionate: empowering and supporting Thetas for generations through the *Theta Forever Fund*!

With this year being Theta Foundation's 10th year celebrating GivingTuesday, please be sure to mark your calendars for Tuesday, Dec. 2 to honor this incredible milestone and this special sisterhood, and watch for more information about this year's giving challenges and volunteer ambassador roles.

Dec. 2, 2025